

BOOKS

In an age when so many self-help books are on the market, it has become cliché to mention their excess. Nonetheless, people keep writing them. While the following books qualify as self-help, they could also fit into a new niche in the publishing world—the help-your-straight-female-friends category.

The Straight Girl's Guide to Sleeping with Chicks

by Jen Sincero; Fireside, 2005; \$12 softcover

If you are having trouble recruiting a straight girl for the queer team, try breaking the ice with *The Straight Girl's Guide to Sleeping with Chicks*.

Jen Sincero's guide is based on the premise that any sex is good sex as long as the participants are comfortable with it. With that in mind, a whole new world awaits the straight girl willing to do a little traveling. The author demystifies the intricacies of sex between women, includes tips on how to overcome fears, offers ideas on how to approach women and advises how not to hurt feelings when one is "just visiting."

Sincero warms the reader up with frank talk on female anatomy, leading to a discussion of masturbation. After thoroughly covering safe-sex techniques and their importance, she moves right into girl-on-girl sex, beginning with fingering, moving on to oral sex and not stopping until she's covered sex toys, light S/M and threesomes.

Black-and-white photographs of Barbie dolls getting it on assist the reader who has trouble visualizing some of Sincero's graphic descriptions. The guide includes numerous

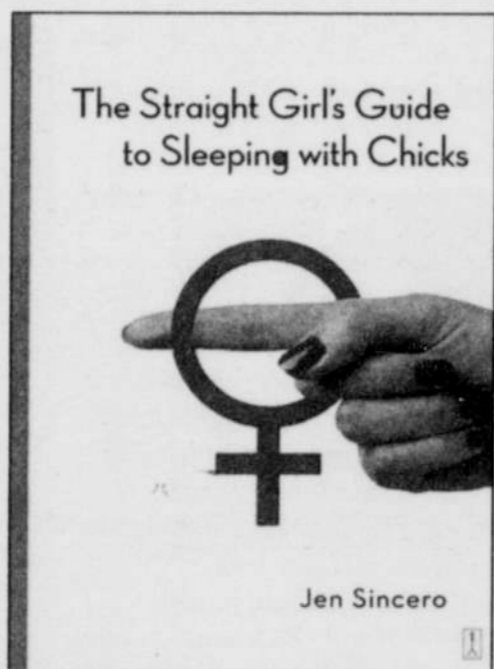
Help a straight sister out

Self-help guides for the hetero women we love

BY KAREN KUDEJ

resources: books and films to set the mood, informative Web sites and women-friendly sex stores. A chart in the appendix takes a tongue-in-cheek approach—perhaps tongue-in-hoo-hoo is a better phrase—to troubleshoot problems the straight girl might encounter when

hooking up with Venus. Sincero may



give readers a little too much information regarding her own sexual practices and preferences, but she seems well intentioned, meaning to dispel fears and taboos surrounding sexual subjects. Before passing this book on to

your straight friends, flip through it yourself. You may find some new ways to spice up your own love life.

Behind Every Great Woman There's a Fabulous Gay Man

by Dave Singleton; Penguin Group, 2005, \$12.95 softcover



If your female friend isn't interested in switching teams after reading Sincero's guide, try helping her out with *Behind Every Great Woman There's a Fabulous Gay Man*.

In his first book, *The Mandates: 25 Real Rules for Successful Gay Dating*, Dave Singleton offered advice for his fellow gay men. In his new book, he targets straight women, drawing on what he's learned from observing his

female friends as they have attempted to nego-

tiate the pitfalls of heterosexual dating.

The book offers advice from a gay man's perspective on where to meet men, how to weed out creeps and how to get over a breakup. Singleton helps women identify what he calls "repetitive, fatal dating flaws," which could be a tendency to be overly critical of dates, a tendency to be too needy or even a habit of consistently dating self-absorbed men. The book also provides tips on what not to do—i.e., don't drink and dial, never ask a man if you look fat, and don't expect a boyfriend to tag along on shopping trips. (Women should take their gay best friends instead.)

And what qualifies Singleton to give such advice? He reasons that many gay men and straight women have friendships (à la *Will & Grace*) that are mutually beneficial due to similar interests (men) and that gay men are able to offer honest yet sensitive insight into the male mind without having an underlying agenda. The book is peppered with testimonies by women who have found the help of their gay friends to be indispensable. Beyond that, readers will find tidbits of advice on how not to turn into their mothers, how to enjoy single life and how to fix things around the house.

Singleton also tucks in chapters on other subjects of importance to many gay men and straight women, namely shopping, plastic surgery and hosting dazzling dinner parties. At times the text is repetitive, and Singleton admittedly frames his advice around stereotypes. However, the tone is light and humorous, and he offers some sage advice to women who are searching for a straight Mr. Right. [M]

KAREN KUDEJ is a Portland free-lance writer. She has never considered a career as a professional bowler.

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